

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 08781 091438Z

41

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 NEAE-00 ACDA-07 SAJ-01 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00

AID-05 SSM-03 /098 W

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P R 091402Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2485

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, LE

SUBJECT: SAIQA AND SOUTH LEBANON

1. WITH THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE SYRIAN ARMY, UNDER THE COVER OF THE ARAB SECURITY FORCE, IN LEBANON, THE SYRIAN-BACKED PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT "SAIQA," WHICH WAS VIRTUALLY DESTROYED DURING THE JUNE 1976 PALESTINIAN BACKLASH AGAINST SYRIAN INVASION, HAS COME BACK TO LIFE. SAIQA LEADER ZUHAYR MUHSIN DESCRIBED SAIQA'S VIEWS ON ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH LEBANON AND OTHER SUBJECTS IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE BEIRUT ENGLISH-LANGUAGE WEEKLY "MONDAY MORNING" DEC 6. HE MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

2. PALESTINIANS AND SOUTH LEBANON. MUHSIN DOWNPLAYED THE IMPORTANCE OF PALESTINIAN FREEDOM OF ACTION IN SOUTH LEBANON TO THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE. AT THE PRESENT TIME, HE SAYS, CONDITIONS WOULD NOT PERMIT AN EFFECTIVE RESUMPTION OF PALESTINIAN OPERATIONS AGAINST ISRAEL FROM SOUTH LEBANON. FURTHERMORE, "OUR GUERRILLA UNITS CAN ENTER INTO OCCUPIED TERRITORY (ISRAEL)

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 08781 091438Z

WITHOUT NEEDING TO BE STATIONED IN SOUTH LEBANON. THEY

COULD BE STATIONED IN NORTH LEBANON OR NORTHERN SYRIA...

"I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD GIVE THE ENEMY A PRETEXT TO MAINTAIN TENSIONS IN SOUTH LEBANON." SOUTH LEBANON, HE SAYS, "IS A RESPONSIBILITY OF PRESIDENT SARKIS AND THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE PUT AT HIS DISPOSAL...WE SHOULD NOT SPARE ANY EFFORT TO HELP THE LEGITIMATE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES AND THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE IN ACCOMPLISHING THE TASK OF RESTORING LAW AND ORDER IN THE COUNTRY..." NEVERTHELESS, HE INSISTS ON MAINTAINING A LIMITED PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN SOUTH LEBANON "AS AN ACT OF DEFIANCE TO ISRAEL."

3. SAIQA DEPLOYMENTS IN THE SOUTH. MUHSIN SAID THAT SAIQA HAS SO FAR NOT REPEAT NOT MOVED TROOPS TO SOUTH LEBANON. HOWEVER, HE SAYS, "WE WILL BE RECUPERATING THE REST OF OUR OFFICES SOON, PARTICULARLY IN TYRE."

4. PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP. MUHSIN SAID "THE PALESTINIAN MASSES WILL NOT TOLERATE THE SAME LEADERSHIP ANY MORE. THE COURSE OF THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION CANNOT POSSIBLE BE RECTIFIED AS LONG AS THOSE SUSPECT, DEVIATIONIST AND CONSPIRING LEADERS REMAIN IN THE SADDLE." HE BLAMED THE INCUMBENT LEADERSHIP FOR THE "DEBACLE" IN JORDAN IN 1970 AND A "PLOT TO DESTROY THE UNITY OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE" IN LEBANON MORE RECENTLY, "IN CONNIVANCE WITH KEMAL JUNBLATT."

5. ON CONVENING THE NATIONAL COUNCIL: "ANY DISCUSSION OF THIS SUBJECT IS PREMATURE."

6. ON CHANCES OF ARAB DETERRENT PRESENCE INSIDE THE REFUGEE CAMPS. "SO FAR, I DON'T THINK THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE NEEDS TO ENTER THE REFUGEE CAMPS...NEVERTHELESS, IF THE NEED ARISES FOR VERY IMPERATIVE REASONS, NOTHING SHOULD PREVENT THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE FROM ENTERING THE REFUGEE CAMPS, AND EVERYWHERE ELSE."

7. ON TURNING OVER HEAVY PALESTINIAN ARMAMENT: "OBVIOUSLY THE RESISTANCE IS NOT AUTHORIZED TO KEEP TANKS AND HEAVY ARTILLERY BECAUSE IT DOESN'T NEED THEM." HE SAID IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR THE PALESTINIANS TO SAVE ALL THAT THE 1969 CAIRO ACCORDS AND 1973 SUPPLEMENTS GAVE THEM BECAUSE OF "THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 08781 091438Z

AWKWARD SITUATION IN WHICH THE DEVIATIONIST LEADERSHIPS (OF VARIOUS PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS) HAVE PUT US."

8. COMMENT: EARLIER REPORTS (BEIRUT 8658), TO THE EFFECT THAT SAIQA ALREADY HAD ELEMENTS IN TYRE AND NABATIYAH, WERE APPARENTLY PREMATURE. MUHSIN'S OTHER REMARKS INDICATE THAT, AS EXPECTED, HE IS STAYING CLOSE TO THE SYRIAN POLICY LINE. FULL TEXT OF INTERVIEW BEING POUCHED NEA.

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